AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1.(Currently Amended) A knife section for mounting on a reciprocating sickle bar for a harvester and reciprocating during use across an edge of a stationary sickle guard, said knife section being flat and having a top surface plane and comprising a base with a laterally extending base edge, the knife section having a leading end spaced from the base edge, mounting holes in the base for securing the knife section to a sickle bar, the knife section having a central dividing plane perpendicular to the top surface plane of the knife section and bisecting the top surface plane between the base and leading end, and the base having side edges parallel to the central dividing plane, the side edges of the base having a length of between 40% and 50% of a distance from the base edge to the leading end, the leading end being of substantially less lateral width perpendicularly to the center dividing plane than a width between the side edges of the base, as defined by the base edge, a pair of cutting edges, one on each side of the knife section and each cutting edge defining a cutting line that continually moves away from the center plane of the knife section from a first end of such cutting line adjacent the leading end to a second end of the cutting line at a junction of the cutting line with a respective side edge on the respective side of the base of the knife section, and each cutting line being concave with respect to a straight line between the first and second ends of the respective cutting line in the range of 14% of the length of the straight line, such that the opening between adjacent knife sections placed edge to edge on a sickle bar results in ~~to~~ increased feed area for crop material that is cut~~material cut~~ with each reciprocation of the knife section when installed on a ~~harvester cutting~~sickle bar.

2.(Original) The knife section of claim 1, wherein said leading

end has a surface transverse to the central plane of the knife section.

3. (cancelled)

4.(Previously Presented) The knife section of claim 1, wherein said cutting line is part of a circle and the line moves away from the center plane at a substantially greater rate for each increment of distance in direction from the leading end to the base along the cutting plane adjacent to the base than at the leading end.

5.(Previously Presented) The knife section of claim 1, wherein each cutting edge is serrated, with outer serration points lying along the respective cutting line.

6.(Cancelled)

7.(Cancelled)

8.(Cancelled)

9.(Cancelled)

10.(Cancelled)

11.(Cancelled)

12.(Cancelled)

13.(Cancelled)

14.(New) A sickle bar for a harvester for use in connection with

stationary sickle guards, said sickle knife comprising a plurality of knife sections placed side by side, with side edges substantially contiguous, the sickle knife including a backing bar, and the plurality of knife sections each comprising a flat knife section having a top surface plane, and having a base that attaches to the backing bar, said base having a base edge and spaced apart side edges with first ends joined to ends of the base edge, and a sickle knife leading end spaced from the base, the knife sections being secured to the backing bar, each knife section having a central dividing plane perpendicular to the top surface plane of the knife section and bisecting the top surface plane and extending between the base and the leading end, the base side edges having second ends spaced from the leading end of the knife a selected distance, each knife section having a pair of cutting edges, one on each side of the respective knife section, and each cutting edge defining a cutting line that continually moves away from the center plane of the knife section from a first end of such cutting line adjacent the leading end to a second end of the cutting line at a junction of the cutting line with second end of a respective side edge on the respective side of the base of the knife section, the side edges intersecting the respective cutting line prior to the cutting edge curving to be parallel to the base edge, each cutting line being concave with respect to a straight line between the first and second ends of the respective cutting line in the range of 14% of the length of the straight line, such that the opening between adjacent knife sections placed on the backing bar results in an increased feed area for crop material that is cut with each reciprocation of the knife sections when installed on a backing bar.

15. (New) The sickle bar of claim 14 wherein the harvester has a plurality of stationary sickle guards mounted on the harvester, the sickle guards including planar support plates across which the

knife sections reciprocate in use, and the support plates being spaced apart a distance substantially one-half of a distance between the side edges of the base of the knife sections, the cutting edges passing across the support plates as the sickle bar is reciprocated.